

**EDUCATION AND YOUTH COMMITTEE**

**of the**

**Suffolk County Legislature**

A regular meeting of the Education and Youth Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held at the William H. Rogers Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York in the Rose Y. Caracappa Auditorium on Tuesday, **May 22, 2001** at 1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Legislator Vivian Fisher, Chair  
Legislator Angie Carpenter, Vice-Chair  
Legislator Jon Cooper  
Legislator Andrew Crecca

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Paul Sabatino II, Legislative Counsel  
Linda Bay, Legislative Aide to Presiding Officer Tonna  
Elizabeth Nostrand, Legislative Aide to Legislator Fisher  
Tom Cunningham, Budget Review Office  
Sal LaLima, Suffolk County Community College  
Chuck Stein, Suffolk County Community College  
Cheryl Rice, Suffolk County Community College  
Ed Wankel, Suffolk County Community College  
Nicole DeAngelo, IR/County Executive's office  
Margaret Bermel, Department of Labor

**NOT PRESENT:**

Legislator Fred Towle  
Legislator Brian Foley

**Minutes Taken By:**

Kimberly Castiglione, Legislative Secretary

*(The meeting was called to order at 1:40 p.m.)*

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

I am very happy to see President LaLima join us today. It is always good to see you. Hello, Chuck. Ed will be doing a presentation, so we certainly have the college well represented.

If you would join us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

*(Salutation)*

Actually, Ed, I was saying that you should get started so that you have more people, however, Angie and I have already seen the presentation, and the people who are late might not have – excuse me, I dropped the mike. There is such a jangle of wires. So, you may wind up having to repeat some of what you say when the Legislators arrive. They may have questions for you. So if you could begin to tell us about it – Legislator Cooper I don't believe had seen this presentation.

**MR. WANKEL:**

I would like to thank you for allowing us to come this morning to speak about a resolution that will be going before the Legislature to authorize a 20 year contract for a food concessionaire at the new sports and convention center, or as officially known as the Health, Education and Sports Center.

*(Legislator Crecca arrived at 1:42 p.m.)*

I guess it was last August we were meeting at the college regarding the need for food service at the new facility, because when the building was constructed it did not include food service. It was not eligible for matching funds from the New York State Dormitory Authority. Very quickly we realized that the only way that we were going to be able to function as an educational facility and an economic development facility was to have a food service component in addition to a decorator, an electrician, all those had been taken care of. We also understood we didn't have any money. I don't think that is a secret to anybody.

We came up with an idea to do a public-private partnership. I have been involved in doing those for the last 20 years. I did several within the Parks Department here in Suffolk County. What we did is we put a bid out asking prospective concessionaires if they would be willing to construct an addition to our facility, which Cheri can point out over here.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Cheri, can you grab a mike? That way you are on the record. Thank you.

**MS. RICE:**

This is the actual sports area. This is the actual field house. The pool is here, the classroom buildings are here, the police academy is here. The area that Ed is speaking about with the building would actually be in this little right angle area right in there. If you want, I can bring the picture around closer.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

It is very clear from here, Cheri.

**MR. WANKEL:**

Before we put out the proposal we had our architects, Baldazano, put together a study as to where the best location would be to add a food component, and then he actually laid out a schematic plan so that when we put this out to bid the food service bidders were able to see what we were looking for.

So we asked for a minimum of a 10,000 square foot addition. We estimated that it would cost \$1.5 million. We also included in the bid proposal the two cafeterias, one at the western campus and the other at the Selden campus. We have had difficulty over the years attracting and keeping cafeteria operators because the margin of profit is so small. It was the consensus of the administration of the college that if we join the two proposals together we would get more people interested in it or we would be more successful in getting the addition done.

We advertised, we mailed out to 16 prospective food concessionaires. We advertised in the appropriate publications, and we only received two bids back, and one was declared non-responsive by the County Attorney's Office because they did not include the one and a half million dollars, which was what we were looking for for the investment.

Essentially the concessionaire will build the addition that Cheri is pointing to. It will be – they propose to build a 14,000 square foot addition, so it probably will cost more than 1.5 million. There is a snack bar area that will be used by the students and members of the Suffolk County Police Academy. At any one time you could have 350 in that building and probably a total of 1,000 people in the building just for educational purposes.

There is also a kitchen that will be large enough to accommodate dining for upwards of 1,500 people, and then we also to provide bathrooms with access to the athletic fields and to the field house and then storage. When that building was built, it is 250,000 square feet with 1,000 square foot of storage area. So we asked the concessionaire to propose giving us some additional storage, both for their operations as well as ours.

We had a committee interview the one bidder, which is Steve Carl Management, who I know of because they have the concession at Bethpage State Park. They put in an eight million

dollar investment into that facility at Bethpage. Our business office their did their due diligence in terms of evaluating the company and seeing if they were financially able to pay for the addition, and they were. In addition to the \$1.5 million here, they will be spending \$100,000 on the Ammerman Campus in the cafeteria, and they will be paying us a percentage of the gross revenues as well.

The main benefit here, again, the college gets served – it serves the students and educational purposes. What we show here is the basketball court, and we can sit about 3,000 people and they'll also be able to provide food service for those types of events. Then when we have events like the HIA trade show and the Travel Expo 2001, you will see a set-up there. This is for the trade show set-up and the food service would be at the other end.

Then in downtime, during the summer months, on weekends, when the school is closed, we have the opportunity to attract corporate catering, and there has been an interest from organizations such as Symbol Technology and Computer Associates to have corporate events there which will bring revenue to the college because they have to pay a rental for the facility, plus we get a percentage of the gross from the catering. So this whole issue with the food is timely because we're booking events up now through 2004. We have booked the National Librarian Association, many other events which is you want any information on that Cheri can run them down. But without the food component, this facility is only going to function on four cylinders instead of six and we are going to have to bring food vis-à-vis a truck, and that is not the best way to handle it either from a health standpoint or from a organizational standpoint.

We are sitting here with a \$1.6 million investment to the college, percentage of the gross, and filling a need that has been left void by the lack of a food service facility. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Ed, it was very clear when I went to the very well attended and very well run trade show that you needed some food available. You saw that and you had pointed out to me how that really was underscored at that particular event, that you had a need for this.

I wanted to ask you a couple of questions with regards to student use, because we're still talking about an academic location and servicing the students. You said that of course students would be able to access and use the facility. Are you going to have any kind of mean card system as many campuses do for students to be able to get food, let's say for less money than other people? You know, you have a meal card system where they are charged against that card and so it wouldn't cost them as much as buying each thing a la carte?

**MR. WANKEL:**

Some of the staff at the college have discussed that with the proposed concessionaire. Already built into this is that the students will enjoy a lower pricing of food. There will be certain items that will be more affordable, and the college has the right under this agreement to approve all pricing of food. So that is certainly a very good proposal and we would consider that.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Okay. Good. Thank you. I also wanted to ask you about parking. We began to discuss a lit bit about the parking problem which is endemic to everywhere on Long Island. The large conventions would be held during downtime so you wouldn't be foreseeing students out of parking spots that they might ordinarily use?

**MR. WANKEL:**

No. Actually, we have come up with a plan. We use this for the HIA. We use the field where I guess most of you probably know the Mother Cabrini Feast, that is how I identify that field. That field we put curb cuts in and we can fit more than 2,000 cars. On the day we had the HIA event we took a shuttle bus and the Suffolk County police was cooperative, they kind of relocated, and everybody was accommodated and the Executive Dean told me she did not get one complaint on parking and it was probably one of our most well attended events since

we have been open.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Thank you, Ed. I don't have any more questions. Are there any questions from any members? Legislator Cooper.

**LEGISLATOR COOPER:**

How long a contract would we be signing with the concessionaire?

**MR. WANKEL:**

We put in the bid proposal a 20 year agreement, and that is essentially to allow them to amortize their investment, which is typical of other agreements in the County for food service.

**LEGISLATOR COOPER:**

And you had said that the college could approve all pricing on foods, but there must be some formula that's used. I can't believe that no matter what price the concessionaire comes up with the college could say, "No, that is too high, lower it further." What is the cut-off point?

**MR. WANKEL:**

Normally the way it is done, the same way it is done in Suffolk County Parks. The concessionaire submits to the County or in this case the college their proposed menus, the quantities they are going to serve, and then a proposed pricing and justify that pricing, and then there is a mutual agreement between the two entities as to what the prices should be.

We have to all understand they have to make a profit. They are not there to work for nothing, but it has to be reasonable and one way you can accommodate differentiation in prices is to provide some lower priced meals for those people who may be economically deprived and can't afford to have a filet mignon on a roll, maybe there is other types of meals, a tuna fish sandwich or whatever that can be lower priced. That is the creativity that we have to have when we are putting the menus together. You have to have something for everybody. I don't think there is going to be a problem there and we certainly wouldn't want to drive anybody out of business.

**LEGISLATOR COOPER:**

And if any students wanted to brown bag it, would that be permitted?

**MR. WANKEL:**

That's fine, that's perfectly fine.

**LEGISLATOR COOPER:**

Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Are there any other questions? Legislator Carpenter.

**LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:**

To the question of students brown bagging it, this would not be the only location for students to be having lunch.

**MR. WANKEL:**

That is correct.

**LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:**

Because there is a whole other building –

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

They have a cafeteria, a regular academic cafeteria.

**LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:**

{Captree} Commons.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

They have different names, different Suffolk County names.

**MR. WANKEL:**

They are all after State parks, by the way, all the names except the new building.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

And how are we projecting the revenues, Ed? Can you just?

**MR. WANKEL:**

Well, first we have the \$1.5 million investment which equates to \$75,000 a year for 20 years. We are projecting that there will be at least 25 rentals throughout the year generated through having food service and that should generate another \$200,000 a year and then the three percent of the gross the first five years, then it goes to four percent, six percent, and seven percent. So once it is fully up and operating, the biggest revenue the college will get is the benefit of being able to rent the room for catered events for which we get \$7,200 per rental during the week and \$8,400 on the weekend.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

And there were no rough estimates on how much they expected to –

**MR. WANKEL:**

I did make an estimate. As best to my recollection, once it is fully up and operating you are probably looking at about \$250,000 a year including the rental that we get not including the capital.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Thank you, Ed.

**LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:**

Just a question. Have we gotten copies of the agreement to review or has Counsel or Budget Review Office seen the agreement?

**MR. WANKEL:**

The County Attorney's Office approved the RFP and they developed the agreement and they will ultimately approve any final agreement that is approved. In other words, they will review and approve any agreement before it is signed by the President of the college.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Counsel, do we usually see agreements like this? I have worked with Parks.

**MR. SABATINO:**

It is sort of ad hoc. Sometimes the agreements are done ahead of time so there is an opportunity to look at them. Sometimes they are not. I would have to say there is no real consistency. It really varies from event to event or issue to issue.

**LEGISLATOR CRECCA:**

This bill, though, that we have before us, it is a policy decision that we are authorizing an agreement, not a specific agreement?

**MR. SABATINO:**

No, I think the way it is worded is I think it just says to enter into an agreement, but it is a good point to just double check on that.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

I think it is to allow to enter into –

**MR. SABATINO:**

It says to execute a contract for a period of 20 years with an option to renew. It just

identifies who the entity is. So it is not referring to a specific agreement, no.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

And I think Ed had indicated to me that the reason it has to come before the Legislature is because there was only one bidder.

**MR. WANKEL:**

One responsive bidder.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

One response.

**LEGISLATOR CRECCA:**

That's fine. Counsel answered my question.

**MR. SABATINO:**

It is a local law that requires that, just so you know. It takes a two-thirds vote to approve and it takes a specific resolution.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Okay. Are there any other questions for Ed? Thank you again.

**MR. WANKEL:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

And by the way, anyone who hasn't been to the center to see a conference or an event I encourage you to go there. I was very impressed by the HIA trade show. I think you did a great job there, Ed.

I did want to ask President LaLima if you could step forward. Yes?

**LEGISLATOR CRECCA:**

I have a meeting at 2:00. Could we do the agenda and then –

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

We have a very short agenda. I just wanted to ask the President something. We have a short agenda and I think we have a quorum now.

**LEGISLATOR CRECCA:**

That is fine. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

I will only be a minute, but there was something – welcome.

**MR. LALIMA:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

It is good to see you. Thank you for coming. There was one item which I wanted to discuss with President LaLima on the record very briefly. Tomorrow I am going out to the eastern campus to take a look at it. I understand that there is a master plan that has been presented by New York State for us which includes some capital projects which we have not undertaken. One of those is the library on the eastern campus. My understanding is that there may actually be a threat to our accreditation if we don't bring that library up to par. Did I understand you correctly, President LaLima?

**MR. LALIMA:**



That is certainly a possibility because we have been I guess you could say forewarned in prior visits by the {Middle States} Accreditation on the lack of an appropriation library facility at that campus. It has been identified several times as a problem. When they come for the next visit, which is not too long from now, they will be looking to see if we have made any progress in that area.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Okay. I wanted the members of the committee – I just want to get through this quickly so that you can go where you have to go. I would like the members of the committee to be aware that this is a serious issue. Perhaps we can either hold one of our meetings there or you could individually go take a look at the eastern campus, see what the library looks like, so that when we have a time where we are facing this issue, looking at a capital project, everyone can be aware of what is there and what the need is. President LaLima, if you can help us work through that we will look at this issue very closely and we will work together on seeing how we can solve it. I am sure that you will have the support of the members of this committee with that, but I don't want to say that I am sure until I have their assurances.

**MR. LALIMA:**

Sure. At your next committee meeting if you would want I could even bring a copy. It is not the final, final update of the master plan, but it is as close as it could be. We are waiting for them to ship it out to us.

Just for your information, the State requires us to update our master plan every five years and we just completed that cycle of getting the update and we are waiting for them to send us the final, final. Basically it is the same as the draft I have because we had to go through it and respond and –

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

I would appreciate that if you would provide that for us. That would be helpful.

**MR. LALIMA:**

It is very comprehensive because it covers all three campuses and it covers space by space by space. But included obviously in the eastern campus the library, you'll see what they have told us is problems.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Thank you. Are there any questions?

**LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:**

Just to the issue of the library. I have been there a number of times and I know what you are saying. I don't know how much opportunity we are going to have to visit there. Perhaps what you could do is to have some photographs of the existing library to share with the committee. It is not going to take much to photograph.

**MR. LALIMA:**

Sure.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

There is not a long there. We don't need aials.

**MR. LALIMA:**

It is an inside space squeezed into the administrative building up on the second floor.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Yes, it is a tiny space. For a college library we really owe more than that to our kids, I think. President LaLima, was there anything you wanted to mention besides that?

**MR. LALIMA:**

Maybe just a piece of information because I didn't have a chance to get back to you. I have been running around so much lately between Albany and everywhere else SUNY sends me.

About a month ago Newsday put an article showing that we had an audit that showed a \$600,000 loss. I had that investigated because at that point in time that was a draft from the Comptroller's Office that was supposed to be confidential until we had a chance to review it, respond to it, and corrections made. Our accounting and financial people were doing that when somehow that got to the press and they chose to make a headline out of it. Obviously that is very damaging to all of us, particularly us at the college. I learned of it the morning that it came out in the paper by having my radio go on to wake me up and hearing this information. I said what is this?

To make a long story short, when the review was completed between the Comptroller's people and our people, the preponderance of that report was wrong. And so really it came down to a small amount of areas that cover the period of about five or six years through 1998. From 1993 to 1998. And so the degree of problem was significantly less than what was reported in the paper. It is very hard to retract the bad image that that kind of a headline brings to the college. Why anybody would do that to us is hard for me to understand, particularly since it was stamped on every page not for release. We just go another one. We are continually audited, as all departments of the County, and talking to people in the County, they tell me the audit always find problems in their operations as well. You always do. I was an auditor at one time so I know what this is about. But to use it in such a way, it almost seems malicious that the intent of the report or someone to use that on us like that.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Would you be able to provide that review for us?

**MR. LALIMA:**

I guess – Mr. Stein probably –

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Okay, because you and I spoke about this, and you said you hadn't completed the review. If it is completed, perhaps if we could take a look at it.

I need to get to the agenda because there are two Legislators who have to leave and I would like to vote on this, but stick around in case you want to talk about anything else.

**MR. LALIMA:**

Thank you.

**INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS**

**1455-01      Accepting and appropriating 100% State funded grant to fund a Summer Youth Employment Program. (Co. Exec.)**

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Motion and I would like to place that on the consent calendar because it is a 100 percent State funded grant. I make a motion to put a motion on the consent calendar.

**LEGISLATOR COOPER:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Seconded by Legislator Cooper.



**MR. SABATINO:**

Just so you know for the record, it is leasing nine vehicles for a youth employment program. Just so you know.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

I had read that, but it is not going to cost us anything.

**MR. SABATINO:**

I only mention it because in the past leasing has always been an issue. Just for the record so that people are aware –

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Okay. I didn't know that the leasing was an issue. I had looked at the resolution and it didn't look – is there anybody who has a problem with that being on the consent calendar?

**LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:**

Well, you know, I think Counsel raises a point. It is a 100% grant, but there isn't an issue with vehicles that are going to be leased, and I don't think that there is going to be any problem with this passing, but I think we need to, as I mentioned at the last meeting of the Legislature, be a little bit more judicious in the kinds of things we put on the consent calendar. When there is some substance to it I think that it shouldn't, so.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Well, if Counsel has raised the question, and as Legislator Carpenter said, somebody else may have the question, it is no problem for me to just leave it on the regular calendar. I will withdraw my motion to put it on the consent calendar. It looked very straightforward when I saw the resolution. I didn't know. It was probably before my tenure.

**MR. SABATINO:**

It predates you time in all fairness. I just feel an obligation to mention it only because in the past the leasing of vehicles with taxpayer dollars has been an issue. I am not saying it is right, wrong or indifferent. It is just that you should be aware before you –

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

And we will let everybody else be aware by not having it on the consent calendar. 1455 I have made a motion to approve. Seconded by Legislator Cooper. All in favor? Opposed? 1455 is approved. **(Vote: 4/0/0/2 Not Present: Legislators Towle and Foley)**

**1456-01      Authorizing an agreement with a catering concessionaire at Suffolk County Community College. (Co. Exec.)**

**LEGISLATOR CRECCA:**

Motion.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Motion by Legislator Crecca, seconded by the Chair. All in favor? Opposed? 1456 is approved. **(Vote: 4/0/0/2 Not Present: Legislators Towle and Foley)**

**1480-01      Designating contract agencies for funding included in the 2001 Operating Budget to provide services for adopted children. (Cooper)**

This money is already in the budget. It was in the omnibus, Legislator Cooper? And do you want to make a motion?

**LEGISLATOR COOPER:**

Motion.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Seconded by the Chair. All in favor? Opposed? 1480 is approved. **(Vote: 4/0/0/2 Not Present: Legislators Towle and Foley)**

**INTRODUCTORY NON-PRIME RESOLUTIONS**

**1483-01      To establish RFP Policy for securing grants for Division of Human Resources. Assigned to Veterans & Seniors and Education & Youth. (Fields)**

1483 was approved in the Human Resources Committee earlier. We're non-prime. I would like to make a motion to approve.

**LEGISLATOR CRECCA:**

Actually, this was tabled in Veterans and Seniors. I thought that you said it was assigned to Human Resources.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

It was in Human Resources.

**MR. SABATINO:**

This one was tabled in Veterans. It covers three agencies. It covers veterans, seniors and youth. That's why it is here as well as there. But it was tabled in Veterans and Seniors. But Legislator Fisher was correct. Another bill was, one for the Human Resources Department was approved.

**LEGISLATOR CRECCA:**

That's a separate bill though, isn't it?

**MR. SABATINO:**

Yes, a separate bill, but she is right, another bill was approved.

**LEGISLATOR CRECCA:**

Okay, it was a similar bill.

**MR. SABATINO:**

This is the Human Resources Division which – this is the Division for Human Resources which covers Aging, Veterans, and Youth. The other bill was the County Department of Human Resources, Personnel and Civil Service.

**LEGISLATOR CRECCA:**

I make a motion to defer to prime.

**LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Prime being?

**MR. SABATINO:**

Prime is Veterans.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

And it was tabled there?

**MR. SABATINO:**

It was tabled there.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Okay. There is a motion to defer to prime and a second. All in favor? Opposed? I will opposed that motion. **(Vote: 3/1/0/2 Opposed: Legislator Fisher; Not Present:**

**Legislators Towle and Foley)**

**SENSE RESOLUTIONS**

**36-2001      Memorializing resolution requesting State of New York to  
appeal school aid decision. (Caracciolo)**

I would like to take a look at this more carefully. I would like to make a motion to table.

**LEGISLATOR CRECCA:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Seconded by Legislator Crecca. All in favor? Opposed? 36-2001 is tabled. **(Vote:  
4/0/0/2 Not Present: Legislators Towle and Foley)**

If there is no further business – well, I had asked President LaLima if he had any further comments.

**LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:**

Madam Chair, just thank you for your courtesy with moving the agenda. We have a capital budget meeting, so thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Did you want to say anything to the two of us?

**MR. LALIMA:**

No, not really. I just wanted to apologize for not being here last month. I had to be in Albany. I had a two day meeting that the Chancellor held for all Presidents. As I indicated, I try to be here unless –

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

We appreciate your being here today and also bringing that information on the library and the review of the audit, whatever information you have because we were also taken unawares. I had received a call from Newsday and didn't know what they were talking about because that had not been released and so I hadn't seen it. So I would like to have some background information on that.

**MR. LALIMA:**

We will get that information to you, we'll provide it.

**CHAIRPERSON FISHER:**

Well, there is just the two of us. If there is no further business, I don't have someone to second the motion to adjourn, so I will just unilaterally adjourn the meeting. Thank you very much.

**MR. LALIMA:**

Thank you.

*(The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.)*

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